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SUBJECT: JANUARY 4 MFA BRIEFING: IRANIAN ENVOY TO BEIJING,
SIX-PARTY TALKS, TAIWAN, CHEN SHUI-BIAN VISIT, ISLAND
DISPUTE, DEATH OF DPRK DIPLOMAT, DARFUR, PHILIPPINES
SUMMITS, VISITS OF OLMERT, THAKSIN, FRANCE'S ROYAL

[1](#)1. Key Points at the January 4 MFA Press Conference were:

-- Ali Larijani, special envoy to Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, will visit China January 4-5 to discuss the Iranian nuclear issue, bilateral relations and other issues of common interest.

-- Although the MFA denies that the recent phase of Six-Party Talks was a failure, the spokesman said that the principle parties of the Talks must take more flexible and practical attitudes.

-- China is gravely concerned about Japan-United States security discussions regarding the Taiwan Straits and firmly opposes any official exchange between the United States and Taiwan authorities.

-- China holds that the erecting of territorial markers on the Paracel and Spratly Islands is completely within China's sovereignty.

-- FM Li Zhaoxing's successful visit to multiple African nations this week is part of China's implementation of the 8-Point Proposal agreed on at the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation held in Beijing in November.

-- Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin is rumored to be visiting China, Segolene Royal of France and Prime Minister Olmert of Israel plan to visit China and both Premier Wen and Foreign Minister Li will attend summit meetings in the Philippines later this month.

Iran Envoy Carries Message to China

[1](#)2. MFA Spokesman Liu Jianchao announced in the regular January 4 press briefing that Ali Larijani, special envoy to Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, will visit China January 4-5. The two sides will discuss the Iranian nuclear issue, the bilateral relationship and other issues of common interest, Liu said. Liu declined to give specifics regarding with whom Larijani would meet, saying only that the MFA will provide the media with up to date information during the visit.

China Denies Failure of Six-Party Talks

[1](#)3. In response to a reporter's question on Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso's comments that China failed to deliver success in the second phase of the Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks as China previously promised, Liu said that the principle parties must take more flexible and practical attitudes. Liu said that China made assiduous efforts recognized by the parties involved as well as the international community as a whole and will continue to play

an active role. It is clear to all that the Talks were not a failure and that important consensus was reached during the talks.

Grave Concern over US-Japan Security Discussions, Chen Shui-bian's Travel to US

¶4. China has taken note of reports that Japan and the United States will discuss formulating a joint plan to deal with a possible crisis in the Taiwan Straits, Liu said, and regards the matter with grave concern. Liu reiterated that Taiwan is an inseparable part of Chinese territory and that arrangements, discussions or consideration by Japan and the United States regarding Taiwan should respect, adhere to and honor the "one China principle." China's relations with both the United States and Japan are currently improving so China hopes that both countries will do more in respect to this issue, said Liu.

¶5. Asked for comment on reports that Chen Shui-bian would visit Nicaragua via the United States, Liu stated that China firmly opposes any official exchange between Taiwan authorities and the United States and that the relevant parties are quite clear on China's consistent position. The United States should have a clear understanding of the nature of independence forces in Taiwan and honor its commitments to the one China principle and the joint communiques in word and in deed, Liu said. He added that the United States should not send encouraging signals, should not provide a venue for Chen Shui-bian in the United States and should firmly and clearly oppose and confront Taiwan independence in the interests of the peace and stability of Taiwan and the overall state of China-United States relations.

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China Hopes Correct Measures Will Be Taken in Iraq

¶6. On the issues of an expected address by Bush on possible troop increases in Iraq, Liu said that China hopes the parties concerned will take the correct measures to restore stability in Iraq and to give the Iraqi people a happy and stable life.

Markers on Paracel and Spratly Islands

¶7. The Paracel and Spratly Islands and the adjacent waters are within the indisputable sovereign territory of China, said Liu when asked to comment on Vietnam's statement that China's erecting of territorial markers on the islands violates Vietnam's national sovereignty. Liu noted that there is both historical and legal basis for China's claim, namely the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Seas, China's 1992 Ordinance on Territorial Sea and Contiguous Areas and China's 1996 Declaration on the Baselines of Territorial Sea.

China Sends Condolences to the DPRK

¶8. Asked for China's reaction to and details of the death of DPRK diplomat Paek Nam-sun and what effect the event could have on the Six-Party Talks, Liu said the DPRK has released relevant information to the international media and that both State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing have respectively sent their condolences. Liu stated that China appreciates Paek's joint efforts to increase friendship and cooperation between the two countries and that China is still willing to work with others in the Six-Party Talks and push forward with negotiations.

Darfur Peace-Keeping Forces

¶9. Asked about China's role and view toward its participation in peace-keeping forces to be deployed in Darfur, Liu said that China is happy to see the positive developments in the Darfur issue over recent months and will continue to play a constructive and positive role in working with the parties concerned.

Hong Kong Journalist Reportedly Sent to Labor Camp

¶10. Asked for comment on reports that Hong Kong Journalist Ching Cheong has been sent to an education-through-labor camp after being tried on charges of espionage, Liu said that the competent authorities have already released information regarding this issue, which is not within the MFA's jurisdiction. Liu added that Ching's sentence would be handled in accordance with the law.

Debt Relief, FM Li's Visit to Equatorial Guinea

¶11. Liu declined to give specifics when responding to a reporter's question on China's cancellation of Equatorial Guinea's debt ahead of Foreign Minister Li's recent visit to the African nation. China is currently implementing the 8-Point Proposal agreed on in the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation held in Beijing in November, said Liu, adding that FM Li's successful visit to Africa has resulted in multiple agreements and specific projects. Liu did not have details regarding debt relief.

Israel PM to Visit

¶12. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel will make an official visit to China January 9-11 at the invitation of Premier Wen Jiabao. As a major principle party to the Middle East situation and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China's exchange of views with Israel will promote and help the Middle East peace process. The 15th anniversary of official state-to-state relations will also be celebrated at a concert which PM Olmert and State Councilor Chen Zhili will attend. Asked if China would invite the Prime Minister of Palestine to visit China to promote the peace process, Liu said such a visit could be arranged when the two sides deem it necessary. In response to a reporter's suggestion that China has ignored the Palestinian government in visits to the Middle East, Liu said that China has supported the just cause of the Palestinian people and has played a constructive role in the Middle East peace process.

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Premier Wen and FM Li to Attend Philippines Summits

¶13. Liu announced that Premier Wen will travel to the Philippines January 13-16 to attend the Second East Asia Summit, Tenth China-ASEAN meeting, Tenth ASEAN-plus-Three meeting and will chair the Seventh Northeast Asian Leaders Trilateral Meeting, followed by an official state visit at the invitation of President Arroyo. Foreign Minister Li will attend the China-ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, the ASEAN-plus-Three Foreign Ministers Working Luncheon and the East Asian Foreign Ministers Working Luncheon in the Philippines. FM Li will also chair the full session of the Northeast Asian Foreign Ministers Trilateral Meeting.

Segolene Royal of France to Visit China, Thaksin Visit Rumored

¶14. French Presidential Candidate Segolene Royal of the Socialist Party will visit China January 6-9 with a 15-member delegation to discuss bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest. China hopes to further deepen relations between France and all parties of France, including the

Socialist Party, and to push forward the development of strategic relations between the two countries, Liu said. Asked if former Prime Minister of Thailand Thaksin Shinawatra was currently visiting China, Liu said that he did not know any details of Thaksin's travel nor if he was in China, although Liu did confirm that Thaksin has a valid visa.

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